Mission Accomplished:
Certification of the Sibiu-Sura Mica Industrial Park by the Romania Ministry of Development and Prognosis

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On September 26, 2002 a ceremony was held in Sibiu, Romania to celebrate the certification of the Sibiu – Sura Mica Industrial Park by the Romanian Ministry of Development and Prognosis and close out the US Agency for International Development {USAID} funded project through World Learning that resulted in that accomplishment.

The events that led to the development of the Sibiu – Sura Mica Industrial Park began with a USAID funded program managed by the International City/County Management Association {ICMA} in 1998-1999.

This program developed a partnership between Grand Traverse County, Michigan and Sibiu County, Romania. During that period, as a member of the Grand Traverse County delegation, I assisted Sibiu County in the design and creation of the Sibiu Development Agency and the Economic Development Strategy for Sibiu County.

A critical component of the development strategy was the creation of an industrial park.

In May 2000 I was invited back to Sibiu to assist in the selection of a site for an industrial park. The trip was supported with USAID/ICMA funding.

My recommendation was to develop the industrial park on a 95-hectare parcel in the village of Sura Mica, seven kilometers west of Sibiu.

This site was selected for a range of reasons including:

Clear ownership of the land by Sura Mica was established – a major issue in land assembly and development in Romania.
Relative close proximity to municipal water supply; gas, electric and digital telecommunication services; rail, airport, trucking and interurban bus connections.
Commuting distance from a labor force in Sibiu.
Importantly, the entrepreneurial spirit demonstrated by Sura Mica and it's mayor in the recent attraction of Transylvania Print and Pack manufacturing plant to the village.

In December 2000 the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation in partnership with the Sibiu Development Agency was awarded a grant from World Learning under the USAID funded Romanian-American Sustainable Partnership program to provide technical assistance and training for the development of the industrial park.

The activities supported by the grant were:
A professionally prepared business plan and development strategy for the industrial park involving a public/private partnership.
Public hearings and securing government approvals.
Creation of a company to oversee the development and management of the industrial park.
Development of a professional marketing plan for the industrial park.

The training component consisted of a one week training session in Traverse City, Michigan attended by the Mayor of Sura Mica, Mayor of Sibiu, President of Sibiu County and Executive Director of Sibiu Development Agency.

The training course included:
Overview of the concept of the industrial park
Industrial park design and construction
Organizational considerations
Tours of industrial parks under construction and currently in operation
Government permitting and approval process
Environmental impacts
Financial considerations and revenue projections
Speculative building design and construction
Marketing strategies
Selection of market targets and niches for the Sibiu industrial park
Techniques for developing industrial parks without grant funding

The development plan was prepared in accordance with the requirements for certification under the provision of Romania's first law on industrial park adopted in 2000. (Law nr: 134/21.07.2000)

In the spring of 2002 application was made to the Romanian Ministry of Development and Prognosis. Judging the Sibiu – Sura Mica proposal to be superior to all others received, the Ministry approved the project.

The administrative company for the industrial park has launched a marketing effort to attract occupants implementing the marketing strategy developed during the partnership program.

The Romanian – American Sustainable Partnership continues beyond the industrial park project. Additional partnerships have been established as a result of the industrial park project including:
Partnership between Traverse City and Sibiu Rotary Clubs to fund and implement charitable projects.
Partnership between St. Francis School in Traverse City and Georgia Lazar School in Sibiu for cultural information exchange between students.
A mutual cooperative agreement between the Chambers of Commerce of Traverse City and Sibiu.

Also the Traverse Bay Economic Development Corporation continues to supply technical assistance via email when requested by the industrial park company.

The success of this USAID funded endeavor demonstrates the beneficial economic impact that can be achieved at the local level in a former communist country by American volunteers sharing their expertise with people desiring to create a democratic and free enterprise system.